

*Cone (C.D.)*

VALEDICTORY  
ADDRESS,

DELIVERED  
BEFORE THE STUDENTS  
OF THE

Baltimore College of Dental Surgery,

FEBRUARY, 1849.

*Box 3.*

BY C. O. CONE, D. D. S.  
DEMONSTRATOR OF PRACTICAL DENTISTRY.

BALTIMORE:  
JOHN W. WOODS, PRINTER.  
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BALTIMORE, February 23, 1849.

To Dr. C. O. CONE,

*Demonstrator of Mechanical and Practical Dentistry  
in the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery.*

DEAR SIR:—At a meeting of the Students of this Institution held this day in the College buildings, it was unanimously resolved,

That, in consideration of the excellence and ability of your Valedictory Address, delivered this morning, a copy of the same be respectfully requested for publication. In the name of our fellow-students, we beg to make this known to you; and also to express our heartfelt gratitude, for your unwearied efforts to secure our advancement in the department assigned to you in this Institution.

We remain,

Yours, most respectfully,

J. H. A. FEHR, M. D.	}	<i>Committee.</i>
J. U. L. FEEMSTER,		
R. McLIMONT,		

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BALTIMORE, February 24, 1849.

GENTLEMEN:

Your polite note and complimentary request of yesterday was received, and its contents noted.

The Address was prepared in haste, and without expectation of its publication; but nevertheless, it was written for your benefit and entertainment, and consequently is your property. I therefore send you a copy of the same, only regretting that the Lecture in question is not more worthy of publication. Permit me to take this opportunity of expressing my abiding desire for your welfare, and for that of each member of the class. With sentiments of high esteem,

I am, gentlemen, yours, &c.

C. O. CONE.

To Messrs. McLIMONT, FEHR and FEEMSTER.

## A D D R E S S .

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GENTLEMEN.—“Know thyself,” is an injunction not less forcible in its intellectual and physical application, than its moral.

The scenes in which many of you are to move are varied ;—full of activity and bustle—of trial and disappointment; where expectations will be often blasted by sudden defeat; where gross ignorance, mantled in the outward garb of dignity and intelligence, assumes a name and usurps a station which rightfully belongs to the retiring but truly meritorious.

Some of you are about to engage in the practice of the profession you have chosen, thereby incurring both its pleasures and trials, and as an emigrant who proposes to settle in a new country, first travels over it and examines its general character, as well as the best means and necessary qualities for a prosperous debut, so let us make a brief examination of the scenery and demands of the profession to which you are about, or preparing, to enter.

Amongst the numerous causes which contribute to the welfare and comfort of our species, considered in the aggregate, few hold a higher rank than the profession which you have chosen.

The healing art was anticipated but little in its birth, by the more immediate artificial necessities, as we are informed that pain and death soon entered the world after the edict, that “man shall gain his bread by the sweat of his brow.” At this time the science of medicine was in its primitive state, simple in its designs and application, but like the arts with which it has ever traveled hand in hand, in the march of improvement, and which was fitted for the demands which was made for its employment. The science exists not now as it existed then, it has not however diminished the responsibility of those who connect their names with its practice.

Medicine has been perfected by receiving the liberal contributions of every other science, until this mighty engine of art, has received for its better dispensation and more effectual removal of disease, divisions or specialties, and it is that branch or division of medicine that treats of the diseases of the teeth and their parts, that you have selected as the one of your choice.

Until recently this branch of medicine, known as Dental Surgery, has been, in almost every country, confined to the hands of the ignorant and uneducated, and consequently the calling has fallen into obloquy and disrepute.

In this state of things, the provision of any particular instruction, adapted to qualify individuals or classes for the practice of dental surgery, would have been looked upon as chimerical. The establishment of a school for fishermen, an academy for stone-cutters, or an institution for hunters, would have been but a little more ridiculous, and the profession was taught as other callings are—by example.

But whatever our profession suffered from this state of feeling, its utility as a calling was not lessened, or in the hands of the properly educated practitioner, its dignity did not culminate from its meridian altitude, as an important branch of physical alleviation.

With this fact in view, and a personal knowledge that the profession could be successfully practiced, only by such as are fully instructed in medicine and general principles of mechanics, that a few men, anxious for the period when the profession should stand, side by side, with medicine and surgery, established this institution, which, if its top-stone reaches not to the sky, I trust shall be a corner-stone to not a few of you, upon which you shall build a reputation, the height of which can not be measured by cubits, its depth unfathomable, its breadth equalled only by the wants of suffering humanity.

The practice of medicine or any of its branches, and particularly dental surgery, is an art, as strictly and literally such as the art of building, of printing, or metal working, and the more our system of education is made to conform to this view of the matter, provided the principles of the art are not in the meanwhile neglected, the better will it subserve the purposes of the profession. The joiner, the ship carpenter and the smith, initiate their youths into the magic use of the saw, the hammer and the file, and they would laugh at the philosopher who should attempt to convince them that these youths, by studying the principles of mechanics, of the wheel-axle, of the lever, the screw or inclined plain, as taught in books and lectures, might be saved the disagreeable necessity of plying their bones and muscles in the workshop.

From the foregoing illustrations, you fully understand the position which I contend the department over which I have had charge, assumes in importance in your instruction. But in this do not misunderstand me: I do it not at the sacrifice of the just merits of the other and connecting departments of the institution.

I feel sorry to admit it, but frankness compels me to acknowledge the fact, that the mechanical division of the profession, has been one of the greatest curses that has detracted from the dignity, and high position which our calling deservedly merits. This branch of the profession has often been the stepping-stone for the meanest quack to enter on a lucrative practice, pointing out most plainly the estimation in which the practice of this branch is held by the community.

On the practice of the mechanical department of the profession, there has generally existed an erroneous opinion, fraught with dangerous consequences. It has been supposed by many, that mere mechanical tact is all that is necessary in the branch now under consideration;—simply securing beauty of mechanical execution. This latter attainment I will admit to be very desirable and even necessary; but the mechanical contrivances which the dentist constructs in actual practice, are to represent, in their office, important organs, acting by means of delicate springs and parts, in unison with muscles and nerves of the living frame, plainly showing the necessity of a practitioner in this branch being thoroughly grounded in anatomical knowledge that is portable and ever at hand. Again, these mechanical substitutes are always demanded when a pathological change exists, which fact, itself, plainly answers the query, what acquirements should be possessed by the mechanical dentist on this scientific subject.

From a want of knowledge of the subject just named, and other attainments, dental mechanics have been more generally practiced on false principles, that of how much could be done, not making it subservient to its true and legitimate purpose of solving the problem of how little assistance nature should receive from our calling.

But persons who would not be trusted to mend the simplest machine, will, without hesitation, offer their services in dental mechanics, to remedy the structure of the body, alike unacquainted with its delicate strings, as well as the frail bond which holds each cord in harmony.

Thus multitudes come forward with the most meagre attainments, and a miserable mediocrity, without inquiring how they may rise higher, much less make any attempt.

For any other art, they would have served a studentship, and been ashamed to have practiced it publicly, until they are informed of all its branches and their bearings. If any one would sing, he attends a teacher who instructs him in the entire principles, and only after the most laborious process dare to exercise his voice in public. This he does, though he has scarcely anything to learn, but the mechanical execution of what lies in sensible forms before the eye. If any one was learning to execute music on the flute, what hours and days would he spend in not only gaining a knowledge of



the science in all of its bearings, but in gaining facility of his fingers and attaining the sweetest and most expressive execution.

But the mechanical dentist, who is compelled to invent as well as execute, carrying on operations of the mind as well as the fingers, enters upon his duties with little or no preparatory discipline, and then wonders that his operations are not attended with success.

But, gentlemen, you are differently situated, you have enjoyed superior advantages, you go hence from this institution; which, although in its chrysalis state, still its representatives, and as such, the world will demand a fund of widely extended knowledge on all matters appertaining to your profession, beyond what falls to the lot of its ordinary members, who have been less fortunate in receiving the benefits of collegiate dental education. You go hence with an obligation upon you, not less solemn or binding because it has been silently taken. A duty, not less imperative in its demands from not holding your signature. The witnesses of the contract are your fellow students; the informant of a breach of faith, is the community in which you reside; your accusers, the disgrace you bring upon a useful and responsible profession and a worthy institution.

Some of you are expecting to take places in society, in the practice of a profession unusually arduous, requiring untiring zeal and industry; a profession of which Rousseau says, "there is no condition which requires more study; in every country its practitioners are the most truly useful and learned of men." To sustain the dignity of this honorable calling is a duty which rests on you, not merely as a means of acquiring an honorable subsistence, but as a science.

In one particular you all leave this institution as its equals—namely, its pupils. I call upon you, then, in the language of entreaty, to sustain the character and honor of the institution untarnished, and, like fine gold, exhibit the purity of your composition, the more you are tried by the fires of adversity or the hammer of disappointment.

To accomplish this end, you must consider the instruction that you have received here, in the light of first principles, or, in other words, as simple notes of introduction to the facts which you are desirous of becoming intimately acquainted with. To be admitted to this acquaintance, you will be compelled to be industrious.

Success in any profession, whatever may be the natural talent, is always the reward of industry and toil. The instances are many, of men of the first natural talents, whose beginning has promised much, but who have degenerated wretchedly as they advanced, because they made no effort. You are like a boat on an ebbing tide, and unless the motive power of industry be constantly applied, a retrograde direction is at once taken. If Demosthenes and Cicero had been content as they began, and had never made industrious efforts for improvement, they would have been lost in the undistinguished crowd which sunk to oblivion around them.

It was industry that made Nathaniel Bowditch, who received only the literary advantages of free town school education, a mathematician second to none. It was industry that enabled Elihu Burritt to melt down, and form into malleable material, like his own favorite working metal, the almost impenetrable idioms of twenty-six foreign languages. It was industry that raised Velpeau from a mean condition to the very top-round in the ladder of professional eminence; and only by industry will you ever be able to enrol your names high in the scale of professional distinction.

You will, however, find sloth an enemy of strength; a powerful magician, who mutters a witching spell, and binds a dreary fillet over your eyes. If you are once conquered, your activity will consist in turning yourself, like a door on its hinges, only by compulsion; and the only noise you will make in the world will be a snore. Indeed, gentlemen, when I see men who are designed by nature for noble purposes, indolently bartering, Esau-like, their birth-right for what is of less value than his red pottage—listless

leisure and dreamy repose, or idle twaddle—I think I see not a man, but an oyster. The drone in the profession is like that fish on our shores—he might as well be sunk in the mud and enclosed in a shell, or removed, in organization, but a step from the vegetable, as to be stretched on a couch, lounge in his office, or squander his time with the thoughtless.

It is a proverb that twice a year the farmer may sleep late in the morning: between sowing and haying, and between harvesting and threshing. But the dental profession is different. There is no time for its votaries to sleep; no period for rest between planting and maturing, or harvesting and threshing. The flail of industry must be applied to the brain early and late, to beat from its chaff the berry of truth and science, not only by the “broad light of the orb of day,” but the feebler light of the student’s midnight lamp must shed its rays in assisting to heap up the pile in the garner of professional acquirement. “Wisdom is not to be won but with great assiduity and constant application. She must be sought early and attended late; but he who consumes his hours in idle saunterings, or buries them in morning slumbers, shall never see the light of fame.”

But, gentlemen, with all industry, unless it be directed with a proper regard to the profession—bearing ever in your mind the fact, that our calling is eminently practical, one of pure utility. If, nevertheless, you indulge in vague conceptions, and wild erratic aspirations, sober, truth-telling future will stamp on your hopes, with a burning impression, the word *disappointment*.

You are not thrown upon the theatre of professional practice, like Minerva at her birth, in full possession of your professional faculties. Consequently, you should make, as your “leading-strings,” a determination to advance, by rendering each operation complete, and still reaching forward to bring its successor to a nearer point of perfection; and to this end, the beauty and neatness of your manipulations in the one, will be the *prestige* of your triumphs in the other.

Some members of the profession have exhibited a disposition to throw off all connection with the mechanical portion, viewing it as an attachment which properly is independent, and detracts from professional character and dignity, as one of responsibility and learning. This feeling let me caution you against entertaining for a moment, as it will tend in no small degree to lessen your usefulness as practitioners. If you abandon this branch, let it be not from fear of polluting your hands with mechanical duties, but let it be from what is more frequently the cause, a want of ability to solve its difficult problems; and even in this state of affairs, it would exhibit a mind more worthy of success, to continue the effort, by each day shouldering the calf, until the effort to carry the ox is successful.

Mechanical dentistry embodies the general principles of the three chief arts, the creative, useful, and ornamental. “If it gives not bread to the hungry, it enables the hungry to eat, and the dyspeptic to appropriate that bread which Providence has given him;” and when the resources of other branches of the profession can no longer be successfully administered, mechanical dentistry

“Can remedy the ill,

Restore her hopes and make her lovely still.”

Such is the field of your labor. It is a boundless one, but let not your efforts be stayed because you cannot encompass it with a single glance. Remember that others, with fewer advantages, as I know by experience, than you have had, are now high in the scale, and have achieved for themselves renown. The fundamental principles which you have been taught are in your hands and their use confined to yourself, and to you alone. Remember, too, that your excuse must be poor indeed, if others who have failed to enjoy your advantages of training, should outstrip you in the race.

Gentlemen, I shall look upon your entrance into the profession, from this institution, with interest, watch your progress with anxiety, and I trust never to have occasion to regret your declension.



Some of you will go abroad, bearing the honors of the institution. Admitting that the popular heart has been corrupt, and its beatings have not been for scientific and well qualified dentists, and through the wide ramifications of the arteries, and capillaries of the community, the qualifications of the dentist has been cheapness, not worth. Yet you go forth, wielding the Archimedian lever, whose powerful purchase will upheave these evils, and place the dignity and character of the profession before the world in its beauty—pure as the lily, universal as space, and blessing mankind like the spirit of the ever beneficent and merciful.

I have been amongst the Philistines, I know the fatigues of the war. You will meet with quackery in every form; you will see the stable boy throw aside his dung fork for the forceps; and dub himself doctor, to play with the health and disease of important organs: men having no more knowledge of the structure and laws that govern the human body, than we have of the social habits of the inhabitants of the planet Saturn: men calling themselves dentists, who make brick in the summer, and practice dentistry in winter; and you will meet with others, with packs on their backs, like the dromedary, roving from house to house to sell *patent* pills, pull teeth on the newest principles, and “mend old ones” and exhibit the three legged calf, or the two headed goose.

But the true dentist is none of these. He is patient of study and investigation. He makes himself familiar with the structure of man. His path is lighted by the lamp of ages. The path he walks has been trod by the great. The whole earth is his laboratory, and from her capacious bosom, he selects that which not the caprice of to-day, or a changing fancy overlauds. He neither rises nor falls on the breath of excitement. He makes no shallow or false pretensions, nor promises that which science teaches him is impossible. He locates not *permanently* from place to place. He envelops not himself in secrets, mysteries and wonders. He claims not the title of Doctor of Dental Surgery without a legitimate right. He has no object to deceive, as he practices not an art which shall fail him to-morrow. He is the diligent student, that gathers from the lore of the past, and the improvements of the present, that knowledge, hallowed by the test of experience, which is to assist him in his chosen profession.

Yet, strange as it may appear to you, impudent quackery will feast merrily and luxuriously, on the credulity and self-deception of the public.

In order to conquer this evil, it must be attacked, not in its branches, but the axe must be laid at the root of the tree. The head of the hoary hydra quackery, must be severed from its loathsome carcass by the united efforts of the well informed, and educated portion of the profession, for he can never be slain while a part of the profession plucks only the individual members of his body, and leave his great and polluted heart, and his slander-scheming brain, untouched and unassaulted. Why are we, as an institution, assailed by this monster in every part of the country? Why are you dissuaded from attendance upon the instruction of the institution? Because we have dealt quackery a blow under which he reels.

If you meet with difficulties in your professional commencement, be not discouraged. No man can arise to distinction without exertion. The way to wealth is one of hazard, but that to professional eminence, is one of toil and difficulty. You must not be weary in well doing, but pursue your course with the perseverance of the student who declared himself happy in travelling the entire earth's surface bare-footed, to see the seven hilled city. It was perseverance like this that enabled a poor country youth, to make his way on foot three-hundred miles to Yale college, and commenced his studies with the mean sum of three dollars, and in due time offering himself for graduation, and carrying off the honors of his class. It was this kind of perseverance that sent Parmly from his native shores, to a foreign land unknown and unfriended, to obtain a more perfect knowledge of his profession. It will be perseverance like this, that will lead you on to fame and wealth.

Sir James Mackintosh says of the legal profession, that it "is a maxim which arises from the very character of the study, that he who is a great lawyer, must be a great and good man." So might he have said of the Dental profession. The dentist must always be guided by a strict sense of duty. It is the helm which shall guide him on the high-road to fame. A good temper, a general good intention, a common desire and disposition to do right, constitutes a part, but not a whole of duty. Without being governed by a sense of duty in the smallest matter, you will be prompted by caprice, by passion, by prejudice, by antipathy, by the seductions of an extensive practice, by the recklessness, and, I may say, almost criminal, false aspirations of wealth. Let wealth be one of the results of your profession, not the end. In this course, you may for awhile fail in acquiring the popular applause; ignorance may condemn, envy may oppose, slander may insult, malice gnash its teeth, but what if the voice without be stormy, if the voice within says—well done?

As I have before remarked, on another occasion; in your professional course you will, perhaps, be pained by seeing those succeeding who are unqualified, while the man of science, and practical dental education, wears a thread-bare coat, finds a grudging subsistence, and like the hermit, stints the body to enrich the soul. It is such men who coin drachms from their heart's blood, that mint the wealth of the profession by their ceaseless toil, who pour balm upon the world's agonies, and extract its pains. Such men, who are the true benefactors of mankind, sow, but the harvest is not white for them, because the moulten gold flows not from their brain, pure and glowing as from their smelting furnaces.

But such men have their reward; which is the consciousness of doing good. They will not always live amongst strangers, uncaring and uncared for. Confidence and affection will eventually entwine themselves around them. These are rich rewards, for

"To live in hearts we leave behind  
Is not to die."

Gentlemen, others have gone forth before you, stimulated by the same hopes and high resolves. Some of these have toiled by the way-side—have hearkened to the syren voice at the door-way of the Castle of Indolence: while others, having surmounted obstacle after obstacle, and trampled upon the mighty barriers that impeded their onward progress, are now rapidly approaching the pinnacle of professional distinction and human grandeur.

With these you write your names, as companions upon the great high-road of science; and when you return, as we hope you may, after having "hung your banner upon the outer wall" of quackery, and as the old war-horse is animated by the sound of the trumpet, so will we "fight the battle o'er again," by reciting the triumphs of skill and success.

Time, the fierce spirit of the glass and scythe, rides on the bark of positive certainty, propelled by the motive power of creation. No power can stay his onward course. On, still on, he presses. His watchword is eternity. He knows not the chains of sleep or weariness, and night's darkness has no fetters to bind his onward course.

When this all pitiless tomb builder shall have whitened your locks, which are now glossy with the dews of life, and your countenances shall have been ploughed deep by his furrow ox care, may I be able to look on your labors, and exclaim, "these are my jewels."

Gentlemen, there are times when the tongue refuses to give utterance to the ready coinage of the brain; when imagination no longer soars, and when fancy pauses. Such a time is the present.

I know not how to express my thanks in terms sufficiently cordial, for the attention, with which you have listened to, and the interest you have exhibited in attendance on, my instruction. I shall feel an individual interest in you, and each one takes my kindest wishes for his success, and prosperity. I now take my leave of you as demonstrator, resigning that office, which, I trust, will be better filled by my successor.



